

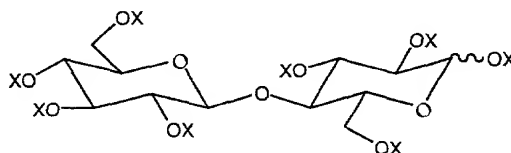
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Such an ester herein in which R differs from R' is sometimes referred to as a CHME.

Such materials, ie CHMEs, demonstrate an excellent
 5 combination of properties rendering those materials particularly suitable for structuring or thickening water-immiscible liquids, enabling them to be employed in the manufacture of base gels for cosmetic or medical actives and particularly for translucent base gels. The benefits accrue
 10 by selecting substitution R' at the anomeric carbon which is different from that of the other alkyl groups R.

For example, by comparison with the employment of various cellobiose octaesters, advantageously, improvements in one
 15 or more of the following properties can be seen, namely clarity, thermal stability and resistance against in situ crystallisation, whilst not sacrificing hardness.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there
 20 is provided a method for the preparation of an acylated cellobiose as described in the first aspect hereinabove comprising the step of reacting an acylated cellobiose having general formula 2



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in which X represents an acyl group (R-CO-) or H, H being not more than a minority of X residues and R represents a

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saturated or unsaturated, linear or branched chain hydrocarbon residue containing from 5 to 31 carbon atoms with an acylating agent containing a residue R' as described hereinabove preferentially at the anomeric carbon of the
5 cellobiose.

In this aspect, either the hydroxyl group at the anomeric carbon atom is acylated, or the acyl group R-CO- at the anomeric carbon atom is transesterified.

10 In a third aspect of the present invention there is provided the use of an acylated cellobiose as described in the first aspect hereinabove for thickening or structuring a water-immiscible liquid, thereby forming a cream, soft solid or
15 solid.

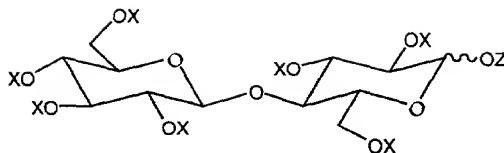
In a fourth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a base composition in the form of a cream, soft solid or solid containing a structurant or thickener an
20 acylated cellobiose as described hereinabove in the first aspect.

In a related fifth aspect of the present invention, the base composition of the fourth aspect additionally contains an
25 active cosmetic, medical, or veterinary agent.

Detailed Description of the Invention and Preferred Embodiments

Herein the acylated cellobiose compounds satisfy the formula
30 shown below:

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When X and Z represent respectively -COR and -COR' in this
 5 formula, R represents a saturated or unsaturated, linear or
 branched chain hydrocarbon residue which contains from 5 to
 31 carbon atoms, often up to 18 carbon atoms, preferably
 from 7 and 12 carbon atoms and especially 8 or 9 carbon
 atoms. Preferably R residues are saturated and desirably
 10 are linear. Most desirably, all R groups are the same. It
 will be recognised that in practice the alkyl substituent of
 a specified chain length in an acylating agent can contain
 impurity levels of isomers or close homologues. For
 example, when R is nominally octyl, the substituent can
 15 comprise as impurities a low proportion, typically not more
 than 5% of iso octyl and n-heptyl /n-nonyl groups.

In this formula, R' represents an aliphatic, aromatic or
 cycloaliphatic residue. R' can be alkyl, alkaryl, aryl, or
 20 aralkyl, optionally substituted. In many desirable
 embodiments, R' is non-aliphatic when R is aliphatic.

The residue R' when aliphatic can comprise a saturated or
 unsaturated, linear or branched chain hydrocarbon residue
 25 containing from 1 to 31 carbon atoms, more desirably linear,
 and preferably from 2 to 22 carbon atoms. The R and R'
 residues are different from each other, so that R' is often